

# Interoperability in the Commonwealth of Virginia





**Established to serve as the umbrella program within the Federal government to help local, tribal, State and Federal public safety agencies improve public safety response through more effective and efficient interoperable wireless communications.**

**As a public safety practitioner driven program, SAFECOM is working with existing Federal communications initiatives and key public safety stakeholders to address the need to develop better technologies and processes for the cross-jurisdictional and cross-disciplinary coordination of existing systems and future networks.**

**SAFECOM has developed grant guidance for public safety interoperability equipment grants to local, tribal, and State organizations adopted by FEMA and COPS. They are working for standardized grant guidance for all interoperability grants.**

**Assisting Virginia with the development of the Statewide Interoperability Strategic Plan and governance model  
To use Virginia as an example and to develop best practices  
In order to assist other states.**



# CapWIN – Capitol area Wireless Integrated Network

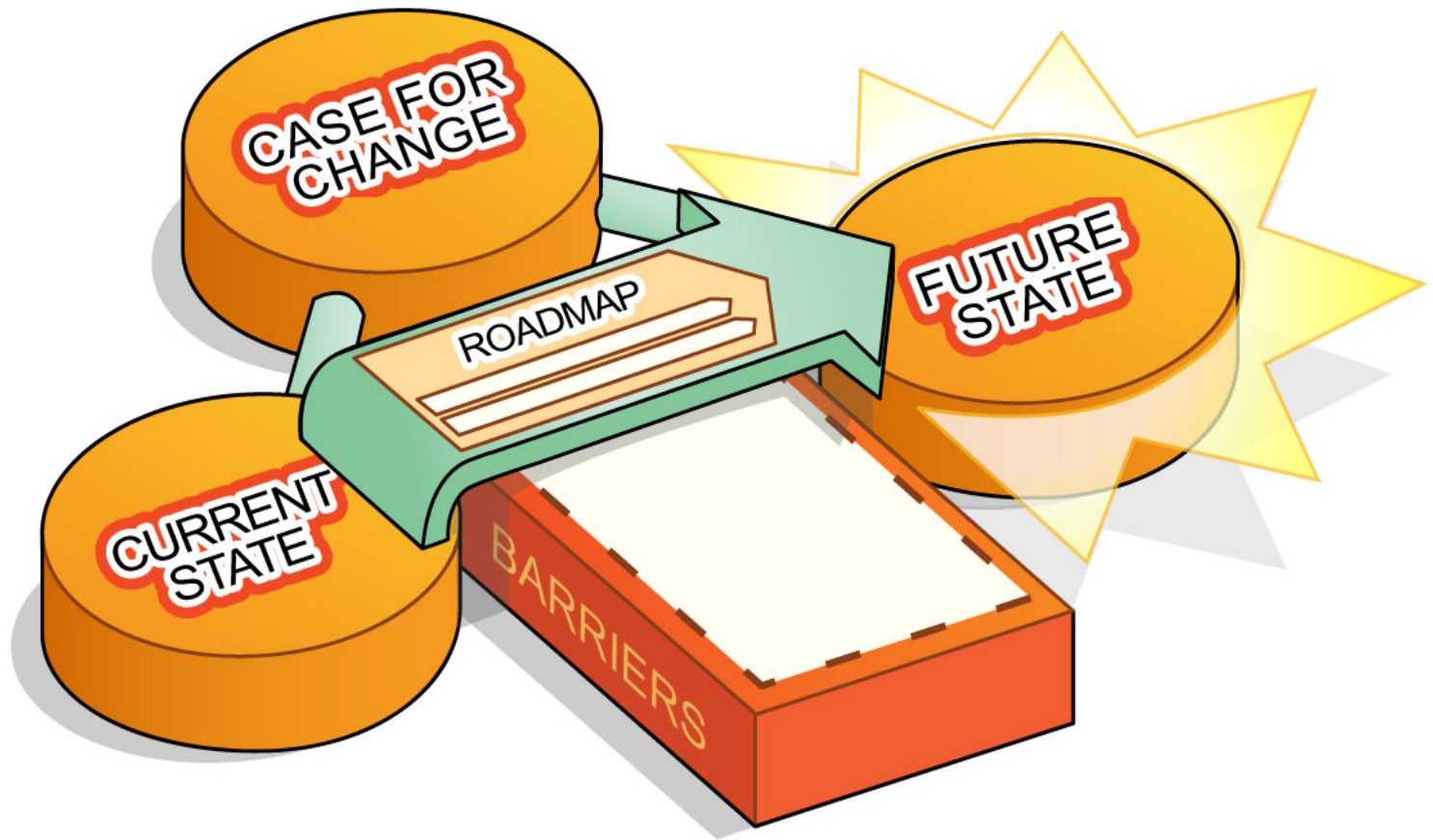
- Capital area Wireless Integrated Network (CapWIN) project is a partnership between the States of Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia.
- Using a standard laptop mounted in a vehicle users will be able to log onto the CapWIN system and see which other agencies are logged on using the global directory, instant message those other users, or enter chat rooms set up for specific incidents to find the latest information.
- CapWIN will allow officers to view not only NCIC information but also the crime databases in all three jurisdictions, potentially alerting the officer that the person is wanted in another state.
- CapWIN has 10,000 licenses to distribute for no fee and all you need is a (1) commercial connections (2) laptop and (3) CapWIN license and mobile data capabilities can be achieved.
- CapWIN has requests from the City of Richmond Police Department, City of Charlottesville, and City of Waynesboro for CapWIN licenses or information thus far.







# Strategic Plan Game Board



# • PLANNING FOR STATEWIDE INTEROPERABILITY IN VIRGINIA •

• IMPROVING COMMUNICATIONS TO SAVE LIVES •

## FOCUS GROUPS

- Wytheville -
- Newport News -
- Harrisonburg -
- Richmond -
- Manassas -
- Lynchburg -

## OUTCOMES FOR FOCUS GROUPS

- Capture of local emergency responder perspectives on interoperable communications
- Shared understanding of interoperability issues specific to this region of VA
- Education and shared awareness of interoperability issues across stakeholder groups
- Attention paid to our commonalities as opposed to our differences

## OUTPUTS

- Local Perspective on Interoperability
- CURRENT STATE
- FUTURE STATE
- CASE FOR CHANGE
- BARRIERS

## STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION

- Richmond

## OUTCOME

- Interoperability plan
  - \* statewide
  - \* locally driven

## INITIATIVES

- Implementation of the Key Initiatives

SAFECOM / Virginia  
Partnership Established



**SAFECOM**

## Shared Principle

Locally driven  
strategic planning



# Strategic Plan Activities

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<u>Activity</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>
• Kick-off Meeting	Feb 24	Washington, D.C
• Meeting to Select Focus Group Participants	March 11	Richmond
• Pre Meeting Interviews	Throughout	Site Visits
• Focus Group 1	April 7	Wytheville
• Focus Group 2	April 13	Newport News
• Focus Group 3	April 20	Harrisonburg
• Focus Group 4	April 27	Richmond
• Focus Group 5	May 4	Manassas
• Focus Group 6	May 6	Lynchburg
• Strategic Planning Session	May 18	Richmond

# Wytheville Interoperability Focus Group



# Newport News Interoperability Focus Group

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# Purpose and Outcomes of the Strategic Planning Process

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- Clear and accurate capture of local emergency responder perspectives on interoperable communications
- Understanding of issues specific to the southwest region of Virginia (as they relate to interoperability)
- Education and shared awareness of interoperability issues across stakeholder groups
- Awareness of the common mission shared by all emergency responders, saving lives, and how interoperable communications support this mission.

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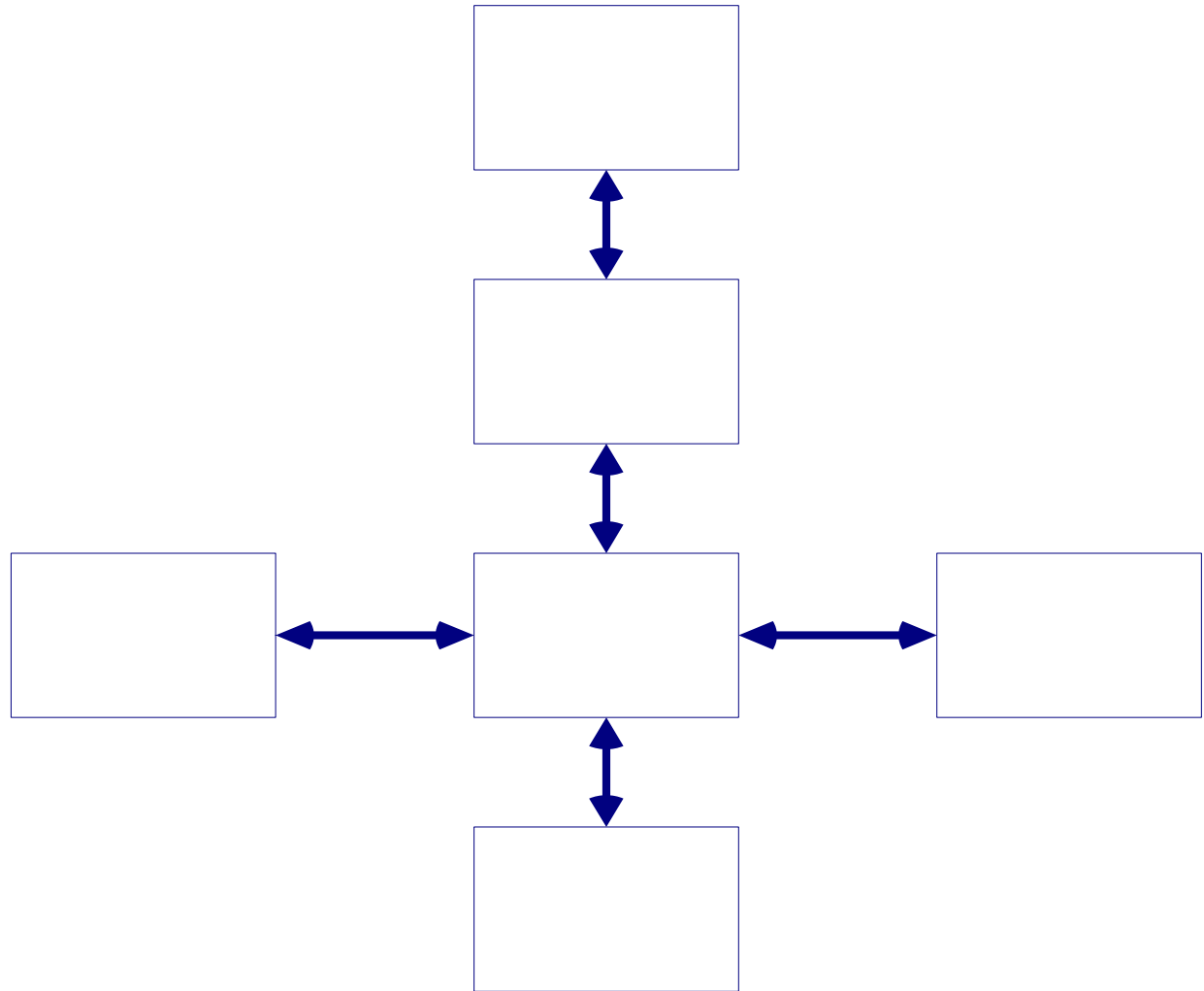
# Focus Group Participants

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- Selected by the following organizations:
  - Virginia Fire Chiefs Association (VFCA)
  - Virginia Sheriff's Association (VSA)
  - Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police (VACP)
  - Virginia Emergency Medical Services
  - Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VD FP)
  - Virginia State Police (VSP)
  - Virginia Department of Health (D VDH)
- The 25 participants in each focus group will be a cross representation of emergency responders at the local level.

# Virginia Interoperability Governance Model - *Proposed*

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# First Responder Interoperability Advisory Committee – **Draft**

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- Capital Police
- Commonwealth Interoperability Coordinator
- Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)
- Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VDFP)
- Virginia Department of Forestry
- Virginia Department of Health (VDH)
- Virginia Department of State Police (VSP)
- Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)
- Virginia Information Technology Agency (VITA)
- Virginia National Guard
- State Agency Radio System (STARS)
- Association of Public Safety Communication Officials (APCO) Virginia Chapter Representative
- University of Virginia Medical Center
- Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police (VACP)
- Virginia Fire Chiefs Association (VFCA)
- Virginia Sheriff's Association (VSA)
- Virginia Professional Fire Fighters (VPFF)
- Virginia Governmental EMS Administrators (VAGEMSA)
- Alexandria Police Department
- Capital Region Communications Steering Committee
- Charlottesville Albemarle County UVA Project
- Hampton Roads Planning District Commission Communications Committee
- Danville 911 Center
- Fairfax County Fire and Rescue
- Harrisonburg/Rockingham County Emergency Communication Center

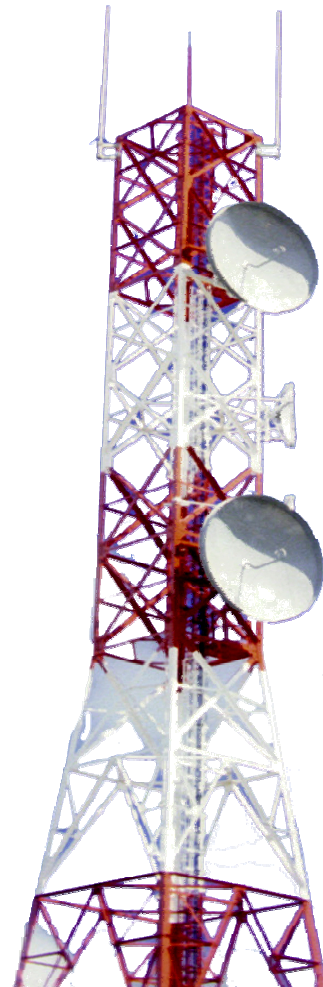


# **An Overview of Interoperability Initiatives**

# Statewide Agencies Radio System (STARS)

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- Will provide necessary and reliable communications for 20 participating state agencies by upgrading the existing Virginia State Police land mobile and microwave radio networks.
- Localities will be able to place antennas on STARS towers which will allow patches to be created when needed and then these localities will be able to talk with other localities or state agencies using the STARS infrastructure.



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## Statewide Agencies Radio System (STARS)

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- Will allow direct communications with compatible localities via VHF high band and 800 MHz.
- STARS is Project 25 compliant and will work with other equipment meeting the Project 25 standards.
- STARS will provide digital coverage to most parts of Virginia and greatly improve the radio system used by VSP.
- STARS will also have portable towers that can be moved to disaster sites to assist with disaster recover efforts.

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# STARS Participating Agencies

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- Alcohol Beverage Control
- Aviation
- Capitol Police
- Conservation and Recreation
- Emergency Management
- Environmental Quality
- Fire Programs
- Game and Inland Fisheries
- Health
- Juvenile Justice
- Military Affairs
- Mines, Minerals, and Energy
- Motor Vehicles
- Professional and Occupational Regulation
- State Police
- Transportation
- Virginia Information Technologies Agency
- Virginia Marine Resources Commission
- Federal Law Enforcement Wireless Users Group

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## State Wide Alert Network (SWAN)

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- SWAN is currently in the RFP stage but should be operational by August 2004 to ensure Virginia can adequately give health alerts and other alerts to health professionals, state agencies, and citizens via:
  - Cell phones
  - Beepers
  - Email, Web pages, and internet
  - PDA's and other wireless devices
  - Faxes
- This will give Virginia the capability to forward health alert notifications from the CDC.
- SWAN is a web-based statewide alert network that will primarily be used by the Virginia Department of Health and Virginia Department of Emergency Management to disseminate information.

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## ISRI Communications Patch Boxes

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- The Virginia State Police plans to purchase seven communications patch boxes that will allow plug and play to various radio systems so that all parties can communicate.
- These communication patch boxes can be taken to a scene and be operational within hours of an event/situation to provide short term/tactical response.
- Will allow local Fire, Police, EMS, State and Federal entities to communicate.
- Will be deployed throughout the seven state districts to ensure availability to all parts of Virginia.
- Radio technicians from VSP will be deployed with the patch boxes to assist with set up and technical assistance.

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# Virginia National Guard Unified Command Suit (UCS)

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- The 34<sup>th</sup> Civil Support Team is a federally funded State National Guard unit in Blackstone, Virginia.
- Can be deployed by the Governor and be in route within 3 hours to support civil authorities to react to events involving Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD).
- The UCS is the ultimate interoperability solution:
  - Interoperability of communications (Voice, data, and video) between First Responders, Local, State and Federal agencies using 800Mhz, VHF, HF, UHF, SATCOM, and commercial Ku Band Satellite.
  - Assessing suspected chemical, biological, or radiological nuclear agents
  - Advises civilian responders regarding appropriate response actions

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# **Examples of Regional Interoperability Initiatives**



# Virginia 800 MHz Trunked Systems

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- Chesterfield County
- City of Richmond
- Henrico County
- City of Chesapeake
- Fairfax County
- MWAA-Dulles & National Airports
- Capital Region Airport
- City of Virginia Beach
- City of Newport News
- City of Hopewell-DSCR
- City of Suffolk
- City of Manassas & Manassas Park
- City of Norfolk
- City and County of Roanoke
- Arlington County
- Loudoun County
- Prince William County
- College of William and Mary
- Dominion Virginia Power
- City of Alexandria
- City of Portsmouth
- City of Colonial Heights
- City of Charlottesville, Albemarle County & UVA\*
- Fauquier County\*
- Culpeper County\*
- York County/James City County\*
- City of Hampton
- Hanover County
- Spotsylvania County
- Central Virginia Regional Radio System

*\* Indicates currently implementing*

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# Central Virginia Regional Radio System

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- Includes the City of Lynchburg, City of Bedford, County of Bedford and the County of Amherst.
- All fire, rescue, police, public works, and other local government agencies operate on this system, including the regional jail.
- It uses MA/Com (Ericsson) 800 MHz trunking system. It does have the capability to handle data traffic.
- City of Bedford uses a VPN and Nextel for data which allows entry and query of Bedford records system along with dispatch and VCIN data.
- The County of Bedford and the City of Lynchburg are currently using the radio system for data (dispatch and VCIN queries).

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# Charlottesville-Albemarle-UVA Project

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- Includes the City of Charlottesville, Albemarle County, and the University of Virginia.
- Won a 6 million dollar U.S. Department of Homeland Security FY 2003 Interoperable Communications Equipment Grant to support a 21 million dollar communications project.
- Will upgrade voice and data to ensure safety of first responders while also increasing interoperability between the City, County, and UVA.
- Will implement an 800 Digital/Analog MHz Public Safety Radio System that will interface Nextel wireless systems and legacy communication systems.
- Deploy 2 Raytheon JPS-1000 (mobile ACU-1000) Mobile Communication/Command Vehicles and make one of these vehicles available to the Commonwealth of Virginia as a “Demand Authorized Audio Patch” system.

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# Capital Region Communications Steering Committee

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- Includes City of Richmond, Chesterfield County and Henrico County.
- Objectives are:
  - Improve Inter-Jurisdictional Communications
  - Deploy Resources Efficiently
  - Expand Radio Coverage Area
  - Provide System Redundancy
- Includes Sub-Committees in the following areas:
  - Policy
  - Operations
  - Systems Management
  - Mobile Data
  - Wireless 911
- Currently developing some recommendations for communications interoperability needs to be funded by a portion of the 6.5 million UASI grant.
- Regional Participants and Ad Hoc users include: RAA, RIC Airport, VCU, UR, ABC, SCP, RMA, Game Warden, RRHA, Metro Aviation Task Force, VSP, US Marshals, 34<sup>th</sup> CST, VANG

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# Hampton Roads Planning District Commission Regional Communications Committee

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- Includes the Cities of Chesapeake, Franklin, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Virginia Beach, and Williamsburg, and the Counties of Gloucester, Isle of Wight, James City, Southampton, Surry, and York.
- Working together to address regional communications interoperability problems. This includes:
- Received a \$6 million dollar Urban Area Security Initiative Port Security Grant for Regional Communications Interoperability Planning and Equipment.
- Currently conducting analysis and gathering information to start identifying how to best use the grant funding to enhance interoperability.

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# Alexandria Police Department

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- Participating as a test site for the NIJ to test, integrate, and evaluate products in actual operational environments.
- Allows the Alexandria Police Department to control a gateway consisting of two radio interconnect devices (ACU-1000) and 19 mobile radios across UHF, VHF and 800 MHz.
- The gateway has the ability to achieve voice interoperability with up to 19 different public safety agencies.
- This system has supported the Inauguration of the President of the United States, Fourth of July activities on the National Mall, and the Washington Metropolitan area sniper incident.



# Interoperability Grants



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# Interoperability Communications Technology Program (ICTP) Grants

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- These FY 2003 grants were distributed through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS):
  - COPS awarded \$66 million in grants to support interoperability projects.
  - FEMA awarded \$80 million in grants to support interoperability projects.
  - Grants ranged from \$846,000 to \$6 million.
  - Charlottesville-Albemarle County-UVA received a \$6 million FEMA Grant
- *In FY 2005 there is an additional \$80 million dollars in grants that COPS will be awarding for communications and data interoperability projects.*

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# Current Federal Grants for Communications Interoperability in Virginia

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- Charlottesville-Albemarle-UVA awarded a 6 million dollar ITCP FEMA FY 2003 Interoperable Communications Equipment grant to support a 21 million dollar communications project.
- VSP received a \$993,500 Earmark from U.S Congressman Wolf to develop a Statewide Interoperability Strategic Plan and fund interoperability projects.
- Hampton Roads Planning District Commission received a 6 million dollar Urban Area Security Initiative Post Security Grant to address regional communications interoperability planning and equipment.
- Virginia has three Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) areas that are receiving approximately 36 million dollars for security initiatives.
  - Communication equipment can be purchased out of these funds.

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# First Responder Interoperability Advisory Committee Grant Awards

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- Will award 1.7 million dollars in grants to support local interoperability projects in the Commonwealth.
  - This funding is from ODP grants and the exact submission process for these grants will be determined after the Statewide Interoperability Strategic Plan is completed.
- Will award \$700,000 dollars in grants to support local interoperability projects.
  - This funding is from the Congressman Wolf Earmark and the exact submission process for these grants will be determined after the Statewide Interoperability Strategic Plan is completed.
- A total of 2.4 million in grants will be awarded by the First Responder Interoperability Advisory Committee.

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## Next Steps

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- Complete the Statewide Interoperability Strategic Plan in the next 4-5 months.
- Create an Interoperability Web Page that links to various state and local websites to distribute information and the strategic plan.

<http://www.interoperability.publicsafety.virginia.gov/>

- Develop the governance structure for the First Responder Interoperability Advisory Committee and hold the first meeting.
- Determine the submission process to award the 1.7 million in ODP funding for interoperability to localities.
- Determine the process to award approximately \$700,000 from the NIJ Grant to local interoperability projects.
- Continue to work with federal agencies, state agencies and localities to optimize interoperability throughout Virginia.

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## **For Additional Information Please Contact:**

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